

is no sinister conspiracy that I am even aware of that suggests that this is an agenda item for the Democrats. Of course, we would like to see the Court be more sympathetic to our point of view, but there is no grand plan for this to happen.

Incidentally, the Constitution of the United States—I usually keep a copy in my desk here—does not mandate the number of Supreme Court Justices. We have had various numbers over the years, and we arrived at the number of nine in 1869. I believe that was the year. So it has been a tradition on the Court since that time.

The answer by Ketanji Brown Jackson—a Federal judge, a DC Circuit judge—was the obvious answer when asked about whether she wanted to pack the Court. She said: Senator, that is not my job. I would be a judge. You are a legislator, and you would have the power, if you wished, to change the composition of the Court. I, as a judge, don't have that authority.

So to make that the No. 1 reason you can't support her nomination is less than compelling.

The second thing he raised was one we heard over and over again. Judge Jackson, what is your philosophy? Tell us your philosophy when it comes to the Court. What is your judicial philosophy? We want to make sure we know.

Well, there are different schools of thought when it comes to the Constitution. Antonin Scalia was a so-called originalist, and Supreme Court Justice Kavanaugh is a textualist, I believe, and there may be many other schools of thought.

The bottom line is, she has said: I have published 578 written opinions. If you want to know what I think about the law, here is my body of work—take a look at it—on almost every topic under the Sun.

So, if you want to know how she rules and what she thinks, she can represent whatever she wishes, but her words already speak for themselves. She has been very open and has provided 12,000 pages from her time on the Sentencing Commission that also reflect her views on very important topics.

There is also the old saw. We knew it was coming. The Republicans are testing their messages for the November election, and I will bet you have heard some of them.

One of them is that Democrats are soft on crime. They said that about Judge Jackson, but they have got a problem. Judge Jackson has been endorsed by the Fraternal Order of Police, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and NOBLE, the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, in addition to other law enforcement leaders.

She has a history in her family of brothers and other members, uncles, who have been in law enforcement, risking their lives for the safety of their communities over and over. One of her uncles is the chief of police of Miami, FL.

This woman is no stranger to law enforcement. It is part of her family; it is part of what she grew up in. To argue that she is "soft on crime" ignores the obvious. She has got it in her blood. She is going to be fair, I am sure, when she is on the Supreme Court, but she has no prejudice against police groups. It is part of her family history.

There is also the question about giving light sentences. We spent more time on this than one can imagine.

Three or four Republican Senators were dwelling on her sentencing in a handful of cases and wouldn't let go of it, day after day for 2 straight days. They refused to acknowledge—and the reality is—that her choice of sentencing guidelines was within the same limits and boundaries of 70 percent of current Federal judges; in some regions, 80 percent. She was not out of the mainstream; she was directly in the mainstream when it came to sentencing. You would think the opposite was true.

When you look at these facts and realize that here is our opportunity to put the first African-American woman on the U.S. Supreme Court and that these are the best arguments they could come up with against her, it really troubles me.

I sincerely hope—I really hope and not just because I want to make sure she is on the Court—that we will have bipartisan support for her nomination. If this turns out to be a strictly partisan vote with this historic opportunity, it will be sad, sad for our country and sad as a commentary on where the parties are today.

I am hoping—I am still hoping—that several Republicans and, I hope, many more will step forward and support her nomination. I am disappointed in Senator McConnell's decision, but I am not surprised.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME EN BLOC—H.R. 6968 and H.R. 7108

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I understand that there are two bills at the desk, and I ask for their first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bills by title for the first time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 6968) to prohibit the importation of energy products of the Russian Federation, and for other purposes.

A bill (H.R. 7108) to suspend normal trade relations treatment for the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus, and for other purposes.

Mr. DURBIN. I now ask for a second reading, and in order to place the bills on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bills will receive their second reading on the next legislative day.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session and that the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works be discharged from further consideration of PN1696, Chris Saunders, of Vermont, to be Federal Cochairperson of the Northern Border Regional Commission, and that the Senate consider the following nominations en bloc: PN1696 and Calendar Nos. 793, 731, 462, 760, 788, 812, 813 and all nominations on the Secretary's desk in the Coast Guard and Foreign Service; that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc without intervening action or debate; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; and that the Senate resume legislative session.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nominations en bloc of Chris Saunders, of Vermont, to be Federal Cochairperson of the Northern Border Regional Commission; Stacey Michelle Brandenburg, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Board of Trustees of the Harry S Truman Scholarship Foundation for a term expiring December 10, 2025; Terrence Keith Wright, of Delaware, to be a Member of the Board of Trustees of the James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation for a term expiring May 29, 2025; Julieta Valls Noyes, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Career Minister, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Population, Refugees, and Migration); Jodi Beth Herman, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development; Erin Elizabeth McKee, of California, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development; Douglas T. Hickey, of Idaho, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Finland; Alina L. Romanowski, of Illinois, a Career Member of the Senior Executive Service, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Iraq; and all nominations on the Secretary's desk in the Coast Guard and Foreign Service, as follows: PN1827 COAST GUARD nomination of Min H. Kim, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD of March 7, 2022; PN1828 COAST GUARD nomination of Michael A. Cintron, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD of March 7, 2022; PN1810